

Idaho Panhandle Avalanche Center Avalanche Advisory

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Good Morning, this is Eric Morgan with the Idaho Panhandle Avalanche Center. This advisory is valid for today, January 28th, 2011, with an outlook for the 29th and 30th. This report does not apply to local ski areas within the forecast region and the hazard rating will remain valid through midnight, January 28th. Special thanks to Idaho Parks and Recreation for sponsoring this morning's avalanche advisory. Thanks again to Dave Alley and the silver mountain ski patrol for providing pit data from the area.

The forecasted weather for our region calls for some precipitation with a snow level around 3000 feet and an increasing chance of accumulating a few inches through Saturday and Saturday night in the mountains. Winds will continue out of the West and Southwest decreasing from 13 to 5mph the next few days, so be careful on windloaded aspects with the new snow. **The avalanche conditions will remain for the outlook period.**

Avalanche conditions for the Idaho Panhandle Forecast Region are rated as MODERATE on all aspects steeper than 30 degrees above 4500 feet. Natural avalanches are unlikely and human triggered avalanches are Possible.

2 Moderate		Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify features of concern.	Natural avalanches unlikely; human-triggered avalanches possible.	Small avalanches in specific areas; or large avalanches in isolated areas.
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Yesterday, Kevin and I ventured out in the Moose Lake area of the Western Cabinet Range and dug pits at around 6000 feet elevation which was above the ice crust you will see at elevations up to around 5000 feet. We found good snow on a consolidating snowpack consisting of 20cm soft snow from the January 24th storm on top of 30cm of consolidated snow from the 20th to 22nd of January which sits on facets atop of the Martin Luther King holiday rain crust. Stability tests showed hard Q3 shears in a few places down to the MLK rain crust, with a Rutschblock of 4Q3 at 35cm on a 34 degree slope. Dave Alley reported yesterday from Silver Mountain Resort finding 35cm of softer snow shearing easily on top of a 30cm crust layer at 6100 feet. In and around the St. Regis Basin, Carol and Dan found a sensitive layer of 20 cm new snow coming off a density change that has not had time to bond. They did not see a problem at this time. The next advisory will be issued next week on February 4th.

The State of Idaho Parks and Recreation Department in cooperation with the IPNF-AC, is conducting (**Free**) avalanche workshops for snowmobilers this winter in St. Maries January 28th and 29th, and in Bonners Ferry February 11th and 12th. For more

information, go to the Idaho Parks and Recreation Department website at www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov, or call Marc Hildesheim, North Region Trails Specialist, at (208) 769-1511.

The Panhandle Avalanche Center in Sandpoint and Sandpoint Parks and Recreation is sponsoring free avalanche workshops for all snowgoers this winter. Our next course will be, "What we can learn from ten years of avalanche accident review in North Idaho", offered 2/9/11. These are offered at the new Forest Service Building in Sandpoint at 6PM and are ***Free to the public***. For class schedules in the Silver Valley contact Dan Frigard at 783-2130. In Avery, contact Ed Odegaard at 245-6209.

If you have a group or club that is interested in more education on avalanche safety we will be available for free avalanche awareness classes beginning in December, so feel free to give us a call. As usual we would appreciate hearing from **anyone** who happens to observe any recent avalanche activity while out in the backcountry or just wants to let us know what is going on in their area.

Have a safe and pleasant weekend!